

INDIANA EARLY LEARNING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Family Engagement Workgroup

October 14, 2014

MEMBERS

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Background / Process:

Members of the ELAC Family Engagement (FE) Workgroup met and reviewed seminal research on family engagement. The FE Workgroup then reviewed and discussed frameworks for family engagement as adopted and articulated by other states through their respective Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) grants.

Trends began to emerge with strong representation by the Head Start and Strengthening Families frameworks in many RTT-ELC grants. Workgroup members looked at crosswalks of leading frameworks and developed protocol to decide what was best for Indiana. The definition of family engagement was decided over a series of meetings and was used to develop a broad framework for review that is specific to Indiana and includes the newly adopted Kindergarten Readiness definition.

Recommendation:

The Family Engagement Workgroup proposes the following definition of parent and family engagement as well as the Indiana Early Childhood Parent and Family Engagement Framework be adopted by ELAC:

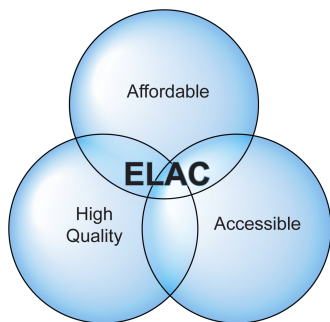
In Indiana, Parent and Family Engagement is defined as:

- Families actively supporting their children's learning and development, and sharing the responsibility with early care and education providers who are committed to engaging with families in meaningful, culturally respectful ways.
- Continuous across a child's life, beginning in infancy and extending through college and career preparation programs
- Occurring across the various early care and learning settings where children play and grow.

To that end, parent and family engagement practices must be initiated, implemented, and supported by key elements with clear goals in mind. Indiana's Early Childhood Parent and Family Engagement Framework articulates seven goals that define parent and family engagement initiatives and describes practices of early care and education providers.

Key Elements:

Environment | Family Partnerships | Teaching & Learning | Community Partnerships | Professional Development | Leadership | Continuous Improvement



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Goals:

1. Support parents and families as child's first teacher(s)
2. Promote family well being
3. Promote positive parent, family, and child relationships
4. Support educational aspirations of the family
5. Support engagement in transition
6. Connect parents and family to peers and community
7. Create leaders and child advocates

The Indiana Early Childhood Parent and Family Engagement Framework puts forth a set of common goals focusing on key elements in early care and educational settings. The successful implementation of this Framework promotes positive school readiness outcomes.

Rationale:

Research tells us families have a shared responsibility with the community for teaching and their ownership of the learning is essential to the success of a child. This partnership respects the parent and/or family as the primary support and teacher for the child, while acknowledging the child is learning and growing in many varied early environments. These culturally respectful environments must provide for best practices in program development, allowing for leadership to grow and continual improvement to take place, both in and out of the classroom. Transition points in a child's life can be seen as an opportunity for greater community support for the child.

The Family Engagement Workgroup expects to work alongside other groups to more deeply understand what family engagement looks like in Indiana, how is it supported by current practices, and what can be done to create even stronger bonds for the lifespan of children in the state.

Full ELAC Decision:

ELAC approved the recommended Family Engagement Framework with the following amendments that have been made:

1. In the first bullet point, the phrase "...includes families" was switched with "A shared responsibility..." to be reflective of the parent/child relationship as primary.
2. Under Goals, amend Goal #3 (which will become Goal #1) to say "Support parents and families as child's first teacher(s)" to be inclusive of all family structures.